BULLETIN ON AGING

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INTRODUCTION

This issue of the ***Bulletin on Aging*** *reports first on the recent activities of the United Nations Office at Vienna/ Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (UNOV/CSDHA) in the field of aging. These include the preparation of a detailed programme of activities to mark the tenth anniversary, in 1992, of the World Assembly on Aging and the International Plan of Action on Aging it adopted, as well as two technical publications.*

It then goes on to review some of the many other projects and activities that are being carried out by and for the world's elderly in preparation for 1992 in various countries of the developing and developed worlds.

I. UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES

The time when one person in ten will be age 60 or over is fast approaching. For most industrialized and some developing countries, it has already come. For others, it is projected to occur in the first years of the next century. This demographic phenomenon, the aging of populations, has far-reaching effects on individuals, families, communities and Governments. It requires adjustments in patterns of saving and investment and in the organization of work, education, leisure, health and housing in all societies. Its advent has been called by some "humanity's coming of age".

Anticipating this demographic situation, the General Assembly endorsed, in its resolution 37/51, the International Plan of Action on Aging and, more recently, in its resolution 44/67, called upon Member States to assist UNOV/CSDHA in the elaboration of a detailed programme to mark the tenth anniversary of the Plan of Action. According to Economic and Social Council resolution 89/50, annex II, this anniversary programme should be substantive in nature. As the focal point within the United Nations system for activities on aging, UNOV/CSDHA will co-ordinate the programme.

As a first step, UNOV/CSDHA is preparing a draft action programme, in consultation with concerned national and international organizations and individuals, for inclusion in a report of the Secretary General on the question of aging to the forty-fifth session of the General

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Assembly. After the action programme has been adopted, UNOV/CSDHA will prepare a calendar of events featuring events inspired by local, national and international initiatives, especially those that exemplify community-wide co-operation; it will make this calendar available during the anniversary year, 1992.

UNOV/CSDHA is also getting ready to publish a comprehensive report on regional experiences in implementing the International Plan of Action on Aging. Financial assistance for this publication has been provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging. Preparatory research has been done by four of the United Nations regional commissions, namely the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). ESCAP and ECLAC have published, or are in the process of publishing, their contributions to the UNOV/CSDHA publication. The ESCAP monograph is entitled **Studies on the Integration of the Aging in Development: Legislation, Social Security and Social Services**. The ECLAC publication is entitled **The Elderly in Latin America: A Strategic Sector for Social Policy in the 1990s**.

Another publication, **Participation of the Elderly in Development: Technical Guidelines for Programme and Project Planning**, is also being finalized by UNOV/CSDHA. The technical guidelines embody the recommendations of the International Seminar - Expert Group Meeting on Policies and Strategies for the Participation of the Elderly in Development, held on Malta from 2 to 5 February 1988, and set forth basic principles as well as project cycle guidelines for the participation of the elderly in development. The technical guidelines are intended to assist in the translation of policy into concrete projects and programmes. They may be used by Governments, non-governmental organizations, development agencies and voluntary organizations when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects or programmes.

II. NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Austria: family relations and the elderly

Austria is one of the countries that have experienced zero population growth for some time. From the 1970s onward, its population has been 7.5 million, and demographers predict that there will be little change in this figure until the year 2020. The only uncertainty in this prediction concerns the future levels of immigration by foreign workers and their families.

In a paper prepared for the conference "The Future of the Family in Europe", held at Vienna from 25 to 28 February 1990, Joseph Hörl and Leopold Rosenmayr of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Social Gerontology and Life Span Research, in Vienna, state that demographic changes such as the long-term decline in the number of births will strongly affect the structure of Austrian families and households. Austria has one of the highest proportions of elderly people in the world: in 1988, 20.2 per cent of the population was over the age of 60. Almost one-fifth (19.4 per cent) of these people do not have children. Furthermore, considerable regional differences exist within Austria. In Vienna, for example, 29.9 per cent of the elderly are childless.

The authors report on the emergence of a family with four or even five generations living at the same time. As a consequence of the enormous reduction in mortality in the twentieth century, a young married woman today can expect to be alive not only for her own daughter's marriage but also for her great-grandchild's entry into school. This expectation has sparked a debate on the consequences of multi-generational families, especially with regard to intergenerational helping and care-giving for the elderly, where it is the middle-aged woman, the "woman in the middle", who faces the most severe problems. While her children will have grown to adulthood, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren will compete for her attention with her possibly infirm mother. Female employment is another source of pressure in this scenario, because more than every second Austrian woman (60.3 per cent) in the age group 45 to 55 years is gainfully employed.

Further information may be obtained from Josef Hörl or Leopold Rosenmayr, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Social Gerontology and Life Span Research, Alserstrasse 33, 1080 Vienna, Austria.

Belgium: getting older in the community

The fact that the proportion of senior citizens in the developed world is constantly increasing has engaged the attention of the League of Large and Young Families in Belgium. To meet the need for information on this subject, as well as related education and training, the Hoger Instituut voor Gezinswetenschappen (Higher Institute of Family Sciences), an organization affiliated with the League, began a training course in October 1989 entitled "Getting Older in the Community".

The aims of this training course are to provide information, increase expertise and promote an awareness of the issues involved and, in so doing, change attitudes towards the elderly. The underlying vision of the creators of the course was to stimulate the aging person's own activities, thus maximizing the period of self-care, supplemented by voluntary assistance.

The training course, which comprises 154 lessons, is aimed at five categories of persons:

(a) The elderly themselves;

(b) Families that care for the aged;

(c) Professionals who come into contact with the elderly in educational work or in the welfare sector, such as nurses and geriatric helpers;

(d) Volunteers who work with or for the aged;

(e) Members of organizations of and for the elderly.

The programme includes the following segments: everyone gets older; changes in marriage and family; retire-

ment; illness and convalescence; confrontation with mortality; helping and being helped; and geriatric policy on a human scale.

Further information may be obtained from the Hoger Instituut voor Gezinswetenschappen, Troonstraat 125, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium.

Chile: the elderly raise angora rabbits

A project that combined angora rabbit breeding and organic gardening was started in the small village of Chacon, Chile, in December 1986. In addition to having received funds from the non-governmental organization Caritas Chile, this innovative income-generating project has also received funds from HelpAge International, Caritas Italy and a development organization in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Three families, each headed by an older person, and a group of older persons living together in an old-age home were given five female angora rabbits and one male rabbit. They were also given rabbit cages and alfalfa and clover seeds for starting organic gardens. The animals and the seeds were given as a loan repayable in kind, i.e. by returning a like quantity of rabbits and seeds to a rotating fund the next year. When the loans had been repaid to the fund, start-up animals and seeds were given to other families and to homes for the elderly in 10 other villages.

In addition to tending the organic gardens, which produce clover, alfalfa and vegetables, both the young and old are taught how to shear the rabbits, spin and dye the angora wool and knit garments. In the village of Chacon, where the programme began, 11 independent groups are now producing garments. Their entire production has been sold each year. While the scheme currently involves about 200 persons, Caritas Chile estimates that it could eventually reach as many as 15,000 older rural inhabitants who are economically disadvantaged.

The project is considered by Caritas Chile to be an outstanding success because it achieves several important objectives. The income it generates for families and groups of elderly people improves the general standard of living in the villages, thereby discouraging migration from rural areas to already overcrowded cities. In addition, the elderly find that their skills and contributions are highly valued by other family members and the community, thereby helping them to regain both social status and respect.

Further information may be obtained from Caritas Chile, Erasmo Escala 1822, Casilla 13520, Correo 21, Santiago de Chile.

(AARP and International Federation on Ageing, **Network News**, vol. 4, No. 2, Fall/Winter 1989.)

Ghana: the sheanut scheme

Traditionally, elderly women in Ghana have processed sheanuts, from which they make butter and oil, which can then be sold. The grinding of the nuts and extracting of the butter and oil is done at home. At the same time, many of the women look after their grandchildren, whose mothers are working on the land.

Sheanut trees grow wild in Ghana, and the nuts ripen in May or June each year. These months are known as the "hunger period" because it is by then that most people have run out of their food supply and must rely on the nuts for their income and some of their food.

Unfortunately, the price paid for sheanuts is low because there is so much for sale and the villagers are unable to store the excess. Rich merchants from outside the rural areas then buy the nuts and store them, only to sell them back to the same people at much higher prices later in the year, when the sheanuts are needed for use in festivals after the rainy season. If the women had money at the time of the harvest, they could buy sufficient sheanuts for themselves and other local people, store them until they are needed and make a small profit at the same time.

Recognizing this, a small group of elderly women approached a local voluntary organization, The Binaba Area Community Health Project (BACH), for loans to purchase sheanuts right after the harvest, so they could make them into oil. BACH liked the plan and loaned the elderly women 10,000 cedis ($US'35) on the condition that the loan was repaid in full. Within six months, after they had sold the butter and oil, the women were able to repay the loan. Encouraged by this success, BACH agreed to give loans to eight more groups of elderly women so that they, too, could buy sheanuts when they were cheap.

Each group has to pay a small fee to BACH, in sheanuts, to help set up the loan system, and they are then given a loan so that they can buy whatever they need during the hunger period. After the rains, the women process their contribution into butter and oil, which they then sell for a profit. With this profit, they pay back their loans, make a small contribution to BACH and still have some money left over for the following year. While BACH is presently acting as a bank for these women, it is envisaged that the women will be self-sufficient in their enterprises in two years' time.

Further information may be obtained from HelpAge International, St.'James's Walk, London EC1R 0BE, United Kingdom.

(HelpAge International, **Ageways 21**, February 1990.)

India: new institute on aging in Madras

To expand its activities in the areas of training, research, documentation, publications and information exchange, the Centre for the Welfare of the Aged in Madras has established the Madras Institute on Aging. Forthcoming publications of the institute include the following: **Care of the Elderly**, a directory of organizations caring for the elderly in India, and **Aging and Welfare of the Elderly in India**, a collection of research papers.

These publications and further information about the Madras Institute on Aging are available from the Centre for the Welfare of the Aged, Plot 1, Yadhaval Street, Virugambakkam, Madras 600 092, India.

READEX FICHE

Mexico: councils of elders draw on Indian traditions

When the Valley of Mexico, today known as Mexico City, was settled by the Nahuatlacas tribes around A.D. 1300, local government at the village level consisted of the chief and the council of elders (Huehueteques). These leaders were responsible for supervising the cultivation of land, recording the results of the harvest and maintaining peace and order among the inhabitants. Growing old was associated with the accumulation of wisdom and experience embodied in the council of elders. The present-day elder councils, operating in marginal urban neighbourhoods throughout Mexico, draw upon this historic Indian model of self-government.

The councils are sponsored by the Sistema Nacional para el Desarollo Integral de la Familia (DIF), a federal government agency promoting health and welfare in the rural and marginal areas of Mexico. The establishment of an elder council proceeds in a number of steps. First, the potential geographical area for council activities is identified and local needs are evaluated. Community leaders and existing groups of elderly persons are consulted, local resources are inventoried and public information meetings organized. Finally, a preliminary plan based on these consultations and assessments takes shape that reflects the particular needs of the locality. Once a local plan has been established, older persons are recruited to participate. The final goal is the creation of a self-managed group of elderly persons, who take responsibility for running their own programme of activities.

Depending on the local community, the range of activities may be very broad. Typically, they comprise health promotion programmes, exercise and recreation programmes, cultural activities, including choral and drama groups, and income-generating activities.

There are approximately 150 elder councils serving over 5,500 older persons in marginal urban areas. The programme is still small given the enormous growth of population in the urban areas of Mexico; however, the Mexican experience is a promising example of how the elderly can remain active members of society by managing their own activities with the assistance of and for the benefit of the entire community.

Further information may be obtained from Luz Esther Rangel, Sistema Nacional para el Desarollo Integral de la Familia (DIF), Prolongacion Xochocalco 1000-A, Mexico.

(AARP and International Federation on Ageing, **Network News**, vol. 4, No. 2, Fall/Winter 1989.)

Republic of Korea: home help service

The rapid economic progress made by the Republic of Korea in the last 25 years has disturbed the tradition of caregiving by the extended family. Urbanization and industrialization, combined with increased life expectancy, have brought about many changes in society. In rural areas, for example, young people are moving to the cities. Since the high-rise apartment buildings to which they move cannot accommodate elderly parents or relatives, the latter are often left on their own.

In response to this phenomenon, the organization HelpAge Korea has established a home help service for the poor elderly of the country. Volunteer helpers visit elderly people in their homes and give them basic support. HelpAge Korea began by trying to assess the plight of elderly people. It compiled a questionnaire and visited 200 elderly people. The following information was obtained: the average age was 72 years; only 10 per cent were couples; more than 50 per cent felt that there was nobody who really cared what happened to them; and the vast majority (80 per cent) of the needy people were women. HelpAge Korea also discovered that these poor elderly people were independent and wanted to remain that way. Only two of the elderly people interviewed said they wanted to live in an old people's home. Most wanted to stay where they were because, although they lived in very poor areas, the great concentration of people in a small area helped foster a neighbourhood spirit, and they felt that someone might be able to help them in the event of illness or accident.

Recruiting volunteer home helpers proved to be a lot easier than expected, since the organization had the unexpected support of the mass media, which gave free publicity for the project. HelpAge Korea had hoped to find 80 volunteers in the first 12 months, but 132 people volunteered their services as a result of the media coverage. Four training sessions have been held for the helpers, who are then matched on a one-to-one basis with the elderly people. Each home helper is expected to make one visit per week of about three hours duration. The kinds of assistance provided by the volunteers include conversation; taking a walk together; massage; helping with officials; cleaning; shopping; cooking and laundry.

Further information may be obtained from HelpAge International, St. James's Walk, London EC1R 0BE, United Kingdom.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: charity and health fund

Every sixth resident of the Ukrainian SSR is a pensioner, and at least 200,000 of these pensioners require extra care and assistance. Of all the republics in the Soviet Union, this republic has the highest proportion of elderly people in relation to the rest of the population. At present, the proportion is 20.7 per cent, and it is continuing to grow.

In a revival of the Ukrainian tradition of showing kindness, compassion and sympathy in the face of another's suffering, the Ukrainian Charity and Health Fund has been established at Kiev to render social relief to the needy and to encourage people to live more harmoniously with one another. Since one of the Fund's priorities is public health, care is being planned for elderly people whose relatives abroad would like to contribute to the cost of their health care. Recently, the Biatron Centre in the Ukrainian SSR and American Trade Company, Inc. of Boston, Massachusetts, signed an agreement to co-operate in implementing this strategy.

The staff and volunteers of the Conscience Fund, as the Ukrainian Charity and Health Fund is unofficially known, are exploring fund-raising methods to

encourage contributions from public and private organizations as well as individuals. It is hoped that the Fund will become completely self-supporting, and to this end, auctions, lotteries and charity concerts have been organized. A number of highly qualified health care specialists have also volunteered their skills to the Fund.

Further information may be obtained from the Ukrainian Charity and Health Fund, 26-28 Kudryavska Street, 252053, Kiev 53, Ukrainian SSR.

(**Ukraine**, No. 2, February 1990.)

United States: statistics on older women

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) recently published a fact sheet on older women as part of its programme "Women's Initiative". The statistics on older women, assembled from a variety of sources in the United States, include the following:

(a) Fifteen per cent of women aged 65 and older, or 2.5 million individuals, live in poverty compared to only 9 per cent of men 65 and older, or 1 million individuals. Elderly black and Hispanic women are especially likely to be living in poverty;

(b) Twenty-one per cent of elderly unmarried women depend entirely on Social Security for income; more than one in three (35 per cent) depend on Social Security for at least 90 per cent of their income;

(c) Nearly 50 per cent of women aged 65 and over are widows;

(d) Seventy-five per cent of all informal care-givers are women. Many are mid-life women who are caring for older women. The average age of care-givers is 46;

(e) Women comprise 75 per cent of all nursing home residents aged 65 and over.

Further information may be obtained from the American Association of Retired Persons, Women's Initiative, 1909 K Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20049, United States.

III. MEETINGS

Conference on social services for the elderly and the disabled

The International Institute for Systems Science in Health Care will convene its fourth international scientific conference, SYSTED 91, at the Barcelona Palace of Congress, Spain, from 10 to 14 June 1991. The objective of the conference will be to address the problems of planning, organizing and managing health and social services for the elderly and the disabled. The conference convenors believe that the problems are so complex that very often no single discipline or profession can solve them satisfactorily. A multidisciplinary approach will therefore be the focus of the conference, which 1,500 participants from around the world are expected to attend.

SYSTED is made up of systems scientists, professional providers and policy-makers, who co-operate in research and planning on behalf of the elderly and the disabled. The first SYSTED conference was held at Montreal in 1983, the second at Perth in 1987 and the third and most recent at Bologna in 1990.

Further information may be obtained from Inter-Congres, Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 646, 08807 Barcelona, Spain.

Congress on seniors in higher education

The XVth Congress of the International Association of the Universities of the Third Age (IAUTA), to be held at Hull, Quebec, from 21 to 23 September 1990, will have as its theme "Seniors in higher education: opportunities for collective and institutional development". The conference will try to find partial solutions to the following questions:

(a) How do seniors in institutions of higher education contribute, or how might they contribute, to collective development?

(b) What measures have institutions of higher learning taken, or should they take, in order to ensure accessibility for seniors?

Twenty-seven speakers from a dozen countries will participate in the conference. It is envisaged that the 54 presentations on projects that are on-going or have been completed by universities of the third age or similar institutions of advanced studies will yield a pool of ideas and opportunities to be shared by all conference participants.

Further information may be obtained from Université du Québec à Hull, Community Services Bureau, P.O. Box 1250, Station B, Hull (Quebec) J8X 3X7, Canada.

Symposium on policy issues and future challenges

The International Symposium on Aging: Policy Issues and Future Challenges was held at Beijing from 6 to 9 December 1989. The symposium, which was part of a project to develop research on the aged for policy-making purposes, was jointly organized by the China National Committee on Aging'(CNCA), UNFPA and the Japanese Organization for International Co-operation in Family Planning (JOICFP).

Experts from Australia, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the United States participated in the symposium, along with representatives from ESCAP, the International Institute on Aging, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the International Association of Gerontology. Symposium participants, after having considered the outcomes of research conducted by JOICFP and CNCA in the past five years, made the following recommendations:

(a) Consciousness, understanding and appreciation of the profound impacts of population aging should be promoted by developing strategies and programmes for general education and mass media campaigns, particularly in developing countries, where the problems of aging are not yet serious but soon will be;

(b) The quality and quantity of education and training in the matter of care for the elderly should be strengthened in order to cope with expected rapid increases in the elderly population. Such

education and training should be directed at Government officials and policy-makers, medical professionals, social workers and families of the elderly;

(c) Comparative studies on population aging in developed as well as developing countries in Asia and the Pacific are needed. A developing country can learn from the experiences of developed countries such as Japan how to formulate adequate policies on aging. With other developing countries, it can share knowledge and information and can set up co-operative programmes on aging;

(d) Surveys and studies on changing family structure and roles in the context of population aging and support for and care of the elderly should be carried out. These surveys and studies should be designed so they can help in the formulation of policies on aging;

(e) Long-term public policies for the development of home- and community-based medical or care-taking facilities and systems for the elderly should be formulated at the national and local levels, with Governments providing services that individual families cannot themselves provide. These services should be strengthened so that the elderly can maintain their places in the community for as long as possible;

(f) Studies on aging need to pay special attention to the role and status of women. Owing to their longer life expectancy and lower socio-economic status, elderly women are likely to have more difficulties than elderly men. As multi-generational co-residence declines, the problems of the female elderly will become even more serious. In this sense, a comprehensive investigation into the status of older women is important not only for scientific/academic purposes but also for policy purposes;

(g) Studies should be encouraged on the effects of migration and urbanization on population structures and on the status and condition of the elderly in both rural and urban areas as they relate to socio-economic development; there should also be studies on the individual needs of the elderly. Special attention should be paid to employment and job opportunities for the elderly and to family support systems.

(ESCAP, **Population Headliners**, No. 178, January 1990.)

IV. PUBLICATIONS

Booklet on dementia

Dementia literally means "loss of mind". It is a progressive brain disease that leaves sufferers unable to deal with their financial affairs and causes crises that may pose legal difficulties for relatives. The issue of dementia and problems associated with it were highlighted during Dementia Awareness Week (20-26 November 1989) in Scotland by the publication of the booklet **Dementia: Money and Legal Matters**.

Published by the non-governmental organization Scottish Action on Dementia, with the assistance of British Telecom, the booklet gives practical information on how to deal with the income and bills of a sufferer, first in the early stages and then in the stage of severe dementia, when the signature of the sufferer is no longer legally valid. It explains in simple terms the available legal provisions, what happens to income and property when the sufferer enters a residential home or hospital, care-givers' rights and welfare benefits. There is also a section on where to obtain further advice.

Further information may be obtained from Scottish Action on Dementia, 33 Castle Street, Edinburgh EH2 3DN, United Kingdom.

Consultation paper on the frail elderly

"Living in the community: new directions in residential services for frail elderly people" is a consultation paper produced by the Elderly Services Branch of the Ministry of Community and Social Services in Canada. The paper attempts to identify living options that can be responsive to the needs of older people who require a supported living environment. The first option, supported independent living, would provide services to the residents on the basis of need, as determined by the residents. The second, supervised community living, would make services available on a 24-hour basis, on-site.

The paper finds that both options have limitations with respect to the provision of professional health care. It also proposes the establishment of a new type of personal care worker: the elderly services worker.

Further information may be obtained from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, 6th Floor, Hepburn Block, 80 Grosvenor Street, Toronto M7A 1E9, Canada.

Manual on Cooperatives for the Aging

An earmarked contribution from the Government of the Netherlands to the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging has made possible the preparation of a new publication, **Manual on Cooperatives for the Aging**, by the Committee for the Promotion of Aid to Cooperatives (COPAC) in collaboration with UNOV/CSDHA.

To obtain information for the manual, a questionnaire was mailed to 3,000 respondents in all parts of the world, including co-operative organizations; organizations providing assistance to co-operatives; institutions and associations concerned with aging; and Government ministries and other official institutions. Since not enough useful information was obtained, it was decided to issue a second questionnaire to broaden the scope of the enquiry: the concept of co-operatives was expanded so it included all forms of self-help groups and associations.

On the basis of the responses to both questionnaires, a directory of persons and associations with an interest in and/or experience of co-operatives for the aging was compiled and issued in the form of this manual.

Responses to the survey indicate that the elderly are forming co-operatives in those places where the phenomenon of aging populations is already making its effects felt, i.e. in the industrialized

countries. The experience of older people who have pioneered this form of co-operation will be of use to older people in the developing countries when their time comes, at the turn of the century and beyond, although it will of course be necessary to adjust and adapt this experience to the different conditions in the developing world.

Another piece of information uncovered by the survey is the considerable number of co-operative movements and individual co-operatives that have not been formed by the aged per se but that are nonetheless active, or would like to be active, in the field. It should also be recognized that a large number of co-operative leaders in the developing world are themselves aging persons. As a result, while the primary focus has been maintained, the manual's scope has been widened to include co-operatives in general. A case-study section illustrates how programmes that benefit both the aging members and the co-operative are being developed.

Further information may be obtained from the COPAC Secretariat, via Cristoforo Colombo 426, 00145 Rome, Italy.

Midlife and Older Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

As a result of advances in health care and disease prevention, the proportion of the world's population that is now surviving to old age is larger than at any time in history. The problems of older women deserve special attention not only because more women than men survive to old age, but also because they reach that vulnerable stage of life having already faced a lifetime of difficulties and discrimination related to their sex.

In a joint publication, **Midlife and Older Women in Latin America and the Caribbean**, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the AARP point out that while poverty, poor health and social isolation are the lot of too many elderly women today, these conditions are not inevitable. The book is a source of information for those who plan health and social services for the elderly and a call to action for policy-makers at all levels.

The first half of the book consists of a background paper prepared for the Consulting Group Meeting on Midlife and Older Women, co-sponsored by PAHO and AARP and held in October 1988. It summarizes the situation of women in the region. While midlife and older women are seen to be an extremely heterogeneous group, diverse in their social and cultural backgrounds, in their levels of education and in their familial responsibilities, they are united by problems inherent to the condition of being older females in societies that focus their attention on the health problems of women in their reproductive years and that undervalue work done by women of any age, but particularly by those who are elderly.

The second half of the book consists of a series of papers that deal with specific situations and problems in individual countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. These reports explore the subject from a variety of perspectives, including health status and services, social supports and psychological well-being and the economic status of older women workers and widows.

This 432-page book is available in English and Spanish from PAHO Publications Center, 49 Sheridan Avenue, Albany NY 12210, United States. A 58-page abridged version is also available free of charge in English and Spanish from the International Federation on Ageing, Publications Division, 1909 K Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20049, United States of America.

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UNOV/CSDHA welcomes material for inclusion in the **Bulletin on Aging** and asks that it be sent to the following address:

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